



Date: April 28, 2020

Subject: PPE Conservation

I am writing to follow up on a letter I sent on April 11th with recommendations about doing everything we can to ensure a continued supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) as we work through the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the recommendations was that hospitals begin storing used PPE, specifically N95 respirators, for possible future reprocessing, if ever needed. With that in mind, since our last communications on this topic, Health Canada has confirmed that N95 respirators can be safely reprocessed.

Therefore, we are suggesting hospitals who have done so to keep discarded respirators that they have stored, since there isn't a time limit to how long they can be safely stored, and to continue collecting more. And as you do, to ensure that you are only keeping respirators that are neither soiled nor damaged. Collected respirators should be stored in receptacles that are clearly labeled, dated, and separated from other types of PPE, and these receptacles should be kept in a dry place.

If these procedures are followed, there will be N95 respirators ready for reprocessing for all hospitals, meeting safety and quality standards, should that become necessary. We are just completing an updated document on PPE conservation strategies including the standards and processes for how proper and safe reprocessing can be carried out across the Province.

Hospitals should also continue, if they can, to save surgical procedure masks. While there is currently no clear evidence supporting the reprocessing of these masks, evidence on sterilization and decontamination methods is rapidly evolving, so we recommend collecting and safely storing used surgical procedure masks for potential reprocessing should ever that be required too.

In addition, where hospitals have supplies of alternate (non-3M) disposable N95 respirators, fit testing should begin in the event they are required. These include National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) certified models as well as non-NIOSH certified equivalents from other jurisdictions that provide protection from the SARS-CoV-2 virus (i.e., KN95, N99, N100, R95, R99, R100, P95, P99, and P100).

Thank you for your help with all of these PPE efforts, and for everything else you are doing to support Ontario's response to this pandemic. We all share a deep commitment to ensuring that we have enough PPE to protect the safety of health care workers and patients.